



Closing Concert

featuring piano masterclass
participants:

Patricia Briskie

Sarah Ho

Katheryn Huget

Maya Nishiwaki

Teruka Nishikawa

Chieko Oda

**Saturday, August 17, 1991
at 8 pm**

**Convocation Hall
Arts Building**

Program



Schumann's *Carnaval* - A Milestone of German Romanticism in Music

The artistic human being as envisaged by important representatives of the German Romantic School like the poet E.T.A. Hoffmann or the composer Robert Schumann found its spiritual home not in the so-called reality but in the intangible realms of fantasy and imagination, in the world of nature represented by imaginary beings like fairies and ghosts and in particular in the intangible sphere of one's own ego. The continuous probing into these areas expanded the emotional perception of the real world by adding significant new dimension of inner experiences.

In a symbolic and sometimes cryptic way the *Carnaval* reveals to the initiate a wide spectrum of inner experiences in a fascinating kaleidoscope of musical pictures derived from various sources and presented in the framework of a carnival ball, which allows for the opportunity of being oneself while hiding behind a mask without necessarily revealing one's real identity.

Aside from real ball scenes a number of important personalities are depicted by Schumann either under their real name or a pseudonym. In addition various figures of the Comedia del' Arte appear as symbols of inner states of mind which the composer projects through his music. And that includes his own dual personality as represented by Florestan and Eusebius.

The compositional unity of this multifaceted stage show is based on four notes in various forms (**Sphinxes**) derived from the letters of the Bohemian town A-S-C-H meaningful for Schumann as the home town of Ernestine von Fricken. These notes are used as thematic building stones for the character pieces. After the introductory **Préambule** two popular figures from the Comedia del' Arte make their appearance, the sad **Pierrot**, who seems to constantly stumble over his own feet and the joyful **Harlequin** entertaining the audience in leaps and bounds. The **Valse noble** leads to the double nature of Schumann as represented by the tender, lyrical **Eusebius** and the wild, passionate **Florestan** who throws an extraordinary temper tantrum only to be interrupted by the graceful appearance of the capricious **Coquette**. A reflective **Réplique** is followed by the whirling **Papillons** complete with a citation of a motif taken from Schumann's earlier **Papillons** op.2. The **Lettres dansantes** is a compositional masterpiece juggling with the four given notes mentioned above. Behind the pseudonym **Chiarina** we find Clara in a passionate musical evocation. The composer **Chopin** is easily discernable and in the interpretation usually first depicted in the dramatic style of a Ballade, transformed in the repeat into the lyricism of a chopinesque Nocturne. **Estrella** stands for Ernestine von Fricken who at the end of the piece seems in parting to slam the door "con affetto".

The duet in the middle section of the **Reconnaissance** seems to depict an intimate conversation of lovers. This is one of the most imaginative pieces in this set. **Pantalon**, the busy miser and the coquettish chambermaid **Columbine** are musically interwoven and lead to the **Valse allemande** during which **Paganini** makes his fantastic appearance dazzling everybody with his devilish artistry. The striking sound effect created by Schumann at the end of this Intermezzo seems to underline the fact that the ball guests are totally stunned and only slowly pick up the waltz rhythm again. A passionate **Aveu** is followed by the **Promenade**, a psychologically most interesting piece. The musical phenomena experienced seem to indicate a meandering between two orchestras playing different tunes, whereby the composer creates a specifically blurred sound pattern when one is exactly in between.

In the "precipitandosi" of the short **Pause** everybody seems to get ready for the big finale, the **Marche des Davidsbündler contre les Philistins**. This piece is a documentation of the revolutionary spirit of the "musica nova" of the time. It is as if Schumann was saying, if only the spirit moves you, conventional rules can be thrown overboard. So why not write a march in 3/4 time? Why not design a piece with a continuous accelerando over 7 pages? Why not displace with a hypnotic persistence the normal beat in the 3/4 bar pattern or insert a 4/4 bar in the middle of the flow? Yes - we the Davidsbündler are entitled to do that and we will be victorious over those Philistins who still adhere to the old forms but are lacking the spiritual power to fill them. Schumann certainly made his point and thereby created one of his greatest masterpieces for piano.

(Helmut Brauss)

Tonight's program is being recorded for future broadcast on "Sunday Arts" heard Sunday mornings between 6 and 9 am on CBC Radio 740.

Program:

Sonata in D major, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
K.576 (1st movement) (1756-1791)
Allegro

Patricia Briskie, pianist

Rhapsody in B Minor, Johannes Brahms
opus 79, no. 1 (1833-1897)

Maya Nishiwaki, pianist

Rhapsody in G Minor, Johannes Brahms
opus 79, no. 2 (1833-1897)

Sarah Ho, pianist

L'Isle joyeuse Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)

Katheryn Huget, pianist

INTERMISSION

Sonata in B-flat minor Frédéric Chopin
opus 35 (1st movement) (1810-1849)
Grave. Doppio movimento

Reflets dans l'eau Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)

Chieko Oda, pianist

Concerto in D minor, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
K.466 (1756-1791)

Allegro

Romanze

Rondo. Allegro assai

Teruka Nishikawa, pianist

(Piano reduction of the orchestra performed by Chieko Oda)

University of Alberta Piano Masterclass

**presented by the Faculty of Extension
and the Department of Music**

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